

ASSESSMENT DEPARTMENT:

Level of Assessment - The New York State Office of Real Property Services has certified the City's Residential Assessment Ratio (RAR) at 84%. This indicates their belief that, as of July 1, 2008, on average all residential property in the City has an assessment of 84% of its market value. We expect a slight modification to this number based upon analysis presented to them, by City Assessor Brian Phelps. This number along with ratios for commercial, vacant and utility properties will be used to determine our equalization rate.

Real Estate Market - The last two months are the first to show a significant decline in average price paid for a single family home from the prior two month period. This number is still in line with the year ago figures and the average for the last two years but it does seem to indicate a declining market from the high point in June/July.

City of Watertown Real Estate Market Snapshot -

<i>Single-family homes</i>	<i>Current Period Oct-Nov 08*</i>	<i>Prior 2 Months Aug-Sept 08**</i>	<i>One Year ago Oct-Nov 07</i>	<i>2 month averages for last 2 years Dec 06 -Nov 08</i>
Number of valid sales	32	37	53	49
Average sale price	\$119,166	\$142,263	\$118,355	\$122,958
<i>2 & 3 family homes</i>				
Number of valid sales	5	7	10	10
Average sale price	\$102,710	\$92,143	\$111,555	\$100,590
Commercial				
Number of valid sales	1	4	4	5
Average sale price	\$160,000	\$299,750	\$212,500	\$290,589

*Only sales for which deeds were recorded on or before November 30th.

**Includes previously unreported deeds.

CITY CLERK'S OFFICE:

Marriage Licenses – This office issued 1,092 marriage licenses and performed 583 marriage ceremonies during calendar year 2008. These figures surpass any previous year. The Watertown Daily Times recently wrote an article regarding the numbers and compared them to numbers for much larger cities, and the City's numbers surpassed the larger municipalities contacted, even though they have a larger population, and much larger office staff.

Audit – This office recently had a field audit conducted by the NYS Dept. of Health, and passed with excellent marks. The state representatives were extremely impressed with our set up for the vital records storage and with the security we have in place for those records.

Intern - Gisela Ocasio, a summer intern in this office, was featured once again in the Watertown Daily Times' sports section. Gisela is a star volleyball player at WHS and has been accepted at Robert Wesleyan College.

CIVIL SERVICE:

Classification Study - The study continues to progress. Much work has been completed in reviewing the titles and job duties in order to obtain the best end results. Compensation surveys have been sent to approximately 50 organizations. Draft job descriptions are currently being prepared by Fox Lawson.

Exams - The Fire Chief and Deputy Fire Chief exams are being offered January 10th. The number of applications received for these examinations were minimal.

CODE ENFORCEMENT:

Building Permits - Building plans for the Riverview Plaza Project on Newell Street and an addition at 440 Coffeen Street have been received. 24 Building Permits for new construction and demolitions and 42 Repair Permits have been issued. Several completed projects have been issued Certificates of Occupancy--such as Buildings 13A, 14A, 3B, and the clubhouse at the Summit Wood project; a Habitat for Humanity house at 333 North Michigan Avenue; and the respite home for DPAO at 652 Thompson Street.

Complaints - This office received and investigated a total of 144 complaints, with 17 cases being referred to DPW for compliance and 5 cases being referred to City Attorneys.

Appearance Tickets - This office issued another 31 Appearance Tickets to City Court to owners of City properties for a range of violations from trash and debris to New York State Property Maintenance Code violations.

Condemned Property - This office condemned two properties for occupancy: 123/125/127 East Lynde Street and 215 Hunt Street.

COMPTROLLER'S OFFICE:

Delinquent School Taxes - In accordance with Section 1332 of the Real Property Tax Law, the City Comptroller's Office has received the 2008-09 delinquent school taxes for collection. The City Comptroller is the tax enforcing officer for unpaid taxes levied within the City limits. The City will earn 5% of the amount of principal and interest collected.

Watertown City School District:

<u>Fiscal Year</u>	<u>Number of Accounts</u>	<u>Amount Outstanding</u>
2008-09	722	\$493,551
2007-08	683	\$476,346
2006-07	666	\$411,008
2005-06	676	\$583,752
2004-05	631	\$609,714

General Brown School District:

<u>Fiscal Year</u>	<u>Number of Accounts</u>	<u>Amount Outstanding</u>
2008-09	0	\$ - 0 -
2007-08	1	\$ 301
2006-07	1	\$ 344
2005-06	0	\$ - 0 -
2004-05	0	\$ - 0 -

ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT:

State Street Reconstruction Project - The project is 100% complete, however the final supplemental with the NYSDOT for reimbursable items is still pending.

Streetscape/Public Square Reconstruction Project - The project is complete except for a small punch list of items.

Western Boulevard - Four meetings have been held with the owners of the Stateway Plaza concerning the proposed corridor. Although the project remains on the Capital Budget, the RFP process is currently on hold pending funding of the project.

Ten Eyck Street Phase I & II - The remaining work to be completed: paving, sidewalk, topsoil and seeding. Project is scheduled to be complete in the spring of 2009.

North Side Trunk Sewer - The consultant has been chosen through the RFP process and the Engineering Services Agreement was approved by the Council. Design is underway.

Butterfield-Barben & Chestnut St. - Due to the high water table caused by heavy rainfall in 2008, this project was held up and will now be bid this winter for construction in 2009.

Riggs Ave - The preliminary design is complete. Detailed design is progressing. There is currently one easement outstanding for construction.

N. Michigan-Bronson St. - The project is currently being designed in-house by department staff. The project may be delayed pending budget review.

Washington Street Sidewalk - The design is 85% complete. A public hearing was held on October 1, 2008 to acquire grading releases from property owners. Two releases have been signed to date.

Algonquin Ave. Sewer Main - Project plans are approved by the NYSDEC. The work will be completed by DPW in 2009.

Emmett Street Storm Sewer - Project survey is complete and preliminary design is underway.

Washington Street Signal Light - The design is complete. An easement for the pole bases is submitted to SMC for approval. Bids for the poles have been received and approved by the City Council.

Greensview/Ives Sanitary Sewer - Updating plans and bid book for bid. The department is preparing for a meeting with the property owners.

CSO Long Term Control Plan (LTCP) - The department is working for approval to conduct modeling of four additional basins with the consultant. WWTP staff prepared the LTCP and submitted it to the NYSDEC by December 1, 2008.

Sanitary Sewer Flow Management Program - The City has held discussions with DANC to develop allocations for Fort Drum, all DANC outside users, and the Route 3 Sewer Board. DANC will provide the required flow data that will be used to develop each allocation. DANC has also provided copies of their approval process and inspection procedures for approval from the City. The allocation and the documents will be referenced in the Sewage Treatment Agreement with DANC. The City and DANC is currently negotiating the agreement.

Breen Avenue- The project is currently being designed in-house by department staff. The project may be delayed pending budget review.

FIRE DEPARTMENT:

Fire Response - The Fire Department responded to a number of fires or weather related emergencies within the City during the months of November and December. The most significant being on November 27th when fire crews responded to 41 weather related responses in a 10 hour period. Additionally, on December 17th, off-duty Firefighter Matt Carpenter spotted a working house fire at 608 Water Street. The fire was reported and Carpenter entered the building saving the family and pets. The fire department responded to approximately 14 fire related calls and two calls for mutual aid.



In addition, the department responded to the following types of incidents during the past two months: burning storm debris, cooking fire, structure fire, chimney fire, attempted arson, porch fire, clothes dryer fire, trapped dog on river ice, gasoline fire, basement fire, as well as many others.

Mutual Aid - The Department responded to two mutual aid requests during the months of September and October: Rapid Intervention Team (RIT) provided to Fort Drum for a residential structure fire and also to Glen Park to extricate victims of a motor vehicle accident.



Training - The Department received the AHURA First Defender device as part of the CEDAP grant and joint training was conducted on December 12th with personnel from the Jefferson County Sheriff's Department, City Police Department, and City Fire in attendance.

Other - Fire Fighter Jeffrey Bancroft retired from the Department effective December 15th.

FLOWER MEMORIAL LIBRARY:

Handicapped Door - The handicapped door installation was completed on November 28, 2008. Patrons with wheelchairs can easily access the buttons and navigate the inside and outside doors without difficulty. A special thanks goes to Librarian III, Yvonne Reff, for writing the grant proposal that was funded through New York State Library Construction Funds.

ATTAIN Lab - The ATTAIN Lab is enjoying great success with the Microsoft Certification courses. They are starting their fifth round of classes for Microsoft Word and by the first of the year, they will be offering classes for certification in Excel. These classes are being utilized heavily by Fort Drum. When you add that series of classes with the Life Skills class for the Children's Home, the pre-training classes for Stream and the beginning computer classes for seniors, they are very busy! The Research Foundation is seriously considering our request to add another person to the Lab. With all the classes they are offering, it is difficult to keep up with the paperwork and prep work involved. Additional staff could help with those specific duties.

New Teen Area - The teen area in the library has just received a facelift with new furniture, an area rug and a magazine rack. Librarian I, Amanda Tehonica, ordered "space-age" looking stools and café tables, as well as leather floor rockers that are arranged around a modern looking area rug that brings together all the colors of the room. Foam letters spelling "Teen Space" were applied to the walls. It is a much more inviting space now and all the choices came from suggestions from our teen patrons.



INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY:

Telephone - Conversion to a fiber based PRI interface for the telephones system main trunk is scheduled for Jan 2. The conversion to a fiber based connection will result in decreased operating cost.

Remote Computing - Public Works has been utilizing the Citrix system remotely over the Internet accessing Sewer maps, Cartegraph, email and productivity applications from laptops in the field.

GPS snowplow/sanding routes – Staff is currently developing a solution to deliver snowplow and sanding routes to the drivers via a dash mounted GPS unit. This is in an attempt to ensure there is no overlap between routes, especially during shift changes. In conjunction with the routing program, DPW will be able to monitor their vehicles locations in real time via the internet. This will allow staff to better understand the location of assets in the field, particularly during a storm event.

PLANNING DEPARTMENT:

Bicentennial Park & Marble Street Park - Draft final design plans were received and are being reviewed by internal departments and the Department of State. Final comments are due in early January. The final design and bid specifications will be ready in February 2009. The Department of State announced the award of \$165,000 for additional fencing and trail improvements at Marble Street Park.

Black River Parks Project and Hole Brothers - Construction of this project, which included a riverfront trail connecting Bicentennial Park to JCC, a riverfront trail at the Abe Cooper site, a stairway and



trail system at the Veterans Memorial Riverwalk, parking area, overlooks, and decking at the Hole Brothers site is substantially complete. The contractor will return in the spring to complete some landscaping and to address minor punch list items. A ribbon cutting will be held in the spring.

Brownfields - The RFP is being drafted for the City's BOA (Brownfield Opportunity Areas) grant. Specific care is being taken to ensure that this grant will align with the LWRP that the City has in order to get the most out of each of these grants.

The City requested a draw down from the EPA grant and was reimbursed for assessment expenses incurred for the Sewall's Island project. The grant award was for \$200,000, which has no matching requirement by the City. The City has been reimbursed nearly \$174,000 of the total grant amount and will be drawing down the remaining portion of the grant and closing it as the Sewall's Island project progresses. Once these funds have been used, the City will begin drawing down funds from the ERP grant as expenses are incurred to finish the assessment and remediation of Sewall's Island.

Erosion Management Plan - The draft Erosion Management Plan has been received from GYMO and is being reviewed by internal departments and the Department of State. Members of the River Committee and Advantage Watertown are reviewing this document.

J B Wise Parking Lot - Lu Engineers is working to finalize the draft final design based on feedback received from the preferred draft design. Staff is also looking for additional funding sources for this project. Design and bid specifications will be completed on this project in March 2009.

Main Street Grant - Staff is working with Neighbors of Watertown and the Watertown Local Development Corp. to finalize plans for the façade and building renovation program. Work will begin on this program during the winter, with construction starting in spring 2009.

Downtown Apartments Program - This program is funded through the 2008 CDBG and HOME grants. It will be used in conjunction with the Main Street grant where possible. Downtown building owners have been notified that applications are being accepted through February 2nd.

Planning Board - The Planning Board met on November 4, 2008 and December 2, 2008. At those meetings, two site plan waivers were granted and one special use permit was recommended for approval of the City Council. One site plan waiver was brought to the Planning Board by National Grid for the construction of a 20' wide x 11' high x 77'6" long fiberglass modular enclosure over existing National Grid substation equipment at 300 Mill Street. The other site plan waiver was brought to the Planning Board by Holy Family Church for the construction of an 864 square foot garage located at 129 Winthrop Street.

Public Square - Staff continued its support of this project with grant administration for the various funding sources and general project oversight. In addition, we provided oversight and project coordination for the Public Square Ribbon Cutting and Tree Lighting Ceremony held on

December 4, 2008. Planning Staff also submitted reimbursement requests totaling \$432,000 through several state agencies.

Restore NY - Both contracts have been approved and executed. Work on the Newell Street site and the Franklin Building should begin shortly and continue through the winter.

Steps to a Healthier NY - A grant was awarded to the City in the amount of \$5,000. The balance of this grant is being used over winter vacation to allow children to skate for free during designated times. The Parks and Recreation Department is tracking the usage. The grant was used during the month of December.



Street Tree Program - Several tree planting projects were completed this fall including tree planting on Public Square, Arsenal Street, Sherman Street, Green Street and Wiley School. Twenty seven trees, along with numerous shrubs and perennials, were planted in October within Public Square as part of the downtown project.

In November, five trees were planted by Department of Public Works crews in the downtown area along Arsenal Street. The planting was a team effort with Stream Global Services, Inc., who was completing sidewalk replacement in front of their building. The City provided tree grates to Stream, who agreed to have their contractor install them as part of the sidewalk replacement. The City followed up with tree planting in the fall, helping to transform this barren section of streetscape into something more inviting.

Working in conjunction with Tree Watertown, the City successfully applied for funding through the Northern New York Community Foundation for tree planting in the 600 through 1200 Blocks of Sherman Street. Twenty two trees were planted in November in the neighborhood of Mrs. Carolyn Whitney who established a tree planting fund with the Foundation at the time of her passing.

Tree Watertown completed its 7th annual fall planting tree planting project on November 8, 2008. The project was a cooperative venture between the City who purchases some of the trees and prepares the planting sites, the Watertown City School District who pays for some of the trees and Tree Watertown members who plant the trees. Approximately 25 volunteers braved the rain to plant a total of 10 trees at Wiley School and 11 trees in the 100 Block of Green Street. Tree Watertown volunteers were joined by members of the Greater Watertown Jaycees, Master Gardeners from Cornell Cooperative Extension along with students and teachers from Wiley School.



Tree planting scheduled for the fall as part of the Ten Eyck Street Reconstruction Project was delayed because of weather until the spring. A total of 10 trees will be planted by the contractor in late April or early May of 2009.

In December, Staff completed the City's Tree City Application for Recertification for 2008. If Watertown is recertified for 2008 by the National Arbor Day Foundation, it will be the City's ninth straight year receiving this award.

ZBA - The Zoning Board of Appeals met on December 17, 2008 and discussed three projects. Two area variances were brought to the Board by Kinney's for the property located at 1304 Washington Street. One was to increase signage and the other was to decrease the parking requirements for this property. The third variance was an area variance to increase signage. This variance was brought to the Board by Taco Bell located at 949 and 945 Arsenal Street. The Zoning Board of Appeals did not approve or deny any of the variances at this time and will reconvene on January 28, 2009 to make a final decision on these projects.

POLICE DEPARTMENT:

Accreditation - On December 4th 2008, Chief Goss and Sgt. Charles Donoghue traveled to Albany and received the department's Accreditation Certificate. It was awarded by NYS DCJS Deputy Commissioner John Bilich and Chief Lloyd Perkins the Chairman of the New York State Law Enforcement Accreditation Council. The Award is proudly on display in the lobby at the Public Safety Building. The department underwent its review in October.



Police Academy - Recruits in the Academy are progressing. They recently took their mid-term and all are maintaining acceptable performance. In addition to classroom training the recruits have been to the firearms range, completed Emergency Vehicles Operation (EVOC) as well as PT and Defensive Tactics. All are looking forward to successfully completing their training and graduating in May 2009.

Mayor's Prayer Breakfast - On November 10th members of WPD were invited to the Mayor's Prayer Breakfast. Chief Goss, Lt. Murphy and Officer M. Ryan attended. We met local clergy and listened to a guest speaker. All felt it was well attended and that each had the citizens of Watertown best interests in mind.

Retirement - On November 26th, 2008, Officer Michelle Reff concluded a 20 year career with WPD. Michelle was the first D.A.R.E. officer and served in that capacity for 10 years. She also served as a Field Training Officer. In 1992, she was honored by the Post 61 American Legion as WPD "Officer of the Year". In 2006 she was awarded the Life saving medal for assisting a man choking at a local restaurant. Officer Reff successfully preformed the Heimlich maneuver dislodging a food blockage.

Sentencing - Michail Foster, convicted of murder in September for the 1996 Alicia Wasilewski case, was sentenced to the maximum of 25 years to life in prison.

Notable Cases - On November 5th 2008, WPD patrols were dispatched to the 500 block of Arsenal Street on a report of a gunshot. Patrols responded to the area and later approached an apartment at 536 Arsenal St. While investigating, officers encountered a male in his apartment holding a handgun. Officers retreated called for additional units. After almost three hours, police negotiators made contact with the male and talked him into exiting the apartment. He was arrested and charged with several weapons offenses and remanded to the Jefferson County Jail awaiting disposition of the matter.

Missing Person - Annette Vasquez was reported missing on December 8th to the Watertown Police Department under suspicious circumstances. Police have been following many leads, but at this time have not been able to locate her. The entire Detective Division has been actively working on this case and hope for a break in the case soon.

PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT:

Snow Removal Operations - Seventy one and a half inches (71.5") of snow has fallen on the City this season to date. Snow removal operations are now taking place around the clock. These operations include sanding, plowing, and the removal of snow from the City's streets, parking lots, crosswalks and sidewalks. Since the beginning of the season crews have logged a total of 6,380 man hours and 4,835 equipment hours performing snow removal operations. The department has also ordered 605 tons of salt and an additional 200 tons of treated salt that will be used during snow removal operations.



Streetscape Dedication/Tree Lighting Ceremony - Buildings & Grounds crews, with assistance from the Electric Department, began to install the City's Holiday Decorations throughout the City on November 12th in preparation for the December 4, 2008 Streetscape Dedication & Tree Lighting Ceremony. The Electric Department worked with the light supplier to install and test the lights, sounds and visual effects on the center island trees. The Electric Department also constructed a large switch to activate the lights at the ceremony. Buildings & Grounds set-up the podium and sound systems and Public Works, with assistance from the Police Department, developed a traffic control plan for shutting down the north side of the Square during the event.



Gaffney Drive Reconstruction Project - Work on the Gaffney Drive Reconstruction Project has wrapped up for the season. A new storm sewer system was constructed and sanitary manholes were replaced. Concrete curbs were poured along both sides of Gaffney Drive and the retaining wall system was constructed around the lift station. Electrical conduit was installed behind the curbing for future use. Once the road base was established, the street was paved with a binder course of asphalt. Gaffney Drive was then re-opened to all traffic. Crews will return in the spring to place the final top course of asphalt.



Sanitary and Storm Sewer Infrastructure - Sewer crews have investigated a total of eleven (11) sewer back-ups and one (1) sewer main back-up. Crews have reset/replaced six (6) manholes frames/covers and replaced a failing manhole structure. In addition to the repair work, sewer crews cleaned and televised the storm and sanitary sewer systems on Breen Avenue and dug test holes on Emmett Street at the request of the Engineering Department. Recent heavy rain and snow melts have overtaxed the western outfall trunk sewer requiring crews to set-up and maintain pumps within the Butterfield Avenue area.



City Hall Generator and Site Infrastructure - The Electric Department set the pre-cast concrete pad for the generator and installed the conduit between City Hall and the generator pad. Additional site infrastructure and site work was completed by Sewer crews and Road Maintenance crews. On December 18th, the Electric Department pulled the wire from the building to the generator pad. Crews are currently working on the terminations and will schedule the installation/testing of the generator with National Grid.

Thompson Park Trail System - Crews completed the clearing and grubbing of a future Thompson Park walkway this November. The rough cut walkway extends from the Gotham St entrance approximately 1,100 feet to the golf course. The work was a combined effort of Thompson Park staff and the Buildings & Grounds crew.



Watertown CitiBus - Watertown CitiBus staff attended the New York State Public Transit Industry Fall Conference for 2008 regarding Transit's Vision. While at the conference the Watertown's Transit Supervisor, as a Board member of the New York Public Transit Association, had the opportunity to meet with and speak to Senator Hillary Clinton about Watertown's public transit needs.

In December, CitiBus completed the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) 19A Audit and were found to be in compliance for the 2008 year.

CitiBus had also provided a shuttle service for the Northern Choral Society. The Northern Choral Society performs a Christmas Concert at the Asbury Church and CitiBus provides two (2) park-and-ride buses to bring patrons to the concert.

Parks & Recreation Programs & Events - The Watertown Municipal Arena has hosted two (2) minor hockey ice tournaments so far this winter season. Tournaments included the Rob Horton Memorial Bantam Hockey Tournament held November 14th, 15th & 16th and the Blair Harff Memorial Hockey Pee Wee Tournament held on December 12-14. The tournaments bring in teams from all over the North Country. Teams visited the area from places like Auburn, Canton, Carleton, Kanata, Nepean, Oswego and Potsdam. A third tournament, the Minor Hockey Squirt Tournament in memory of Ed Lupia, is scheduled for January.

In addition to the hockey tournaments, the Arena has been open for public skating, skate & shoot and Rock'n Skate. The Rock'n Skate program remains a popular with attendance up slightly from last year. The Rock'n Skate program is currently averaging three hundred sixty five (365) patrons with rental revenues averaging \$1,488 per event.



In addition to regular skating programs, the City of Watertown teamed up with Jefferson County Public Health, through programs and grants like Steps to a Healthier NY and Eat Well Play Hard, to offer children a way to stay active over the winter break. Four (4) days over the winter break offered free recreational skating and/or skate rentals to the public.

WATER DEPARTMENT:

Variable Frequency Drive Replacement at WTP Main Pump Station -

Equipment for the project has been delivered to the pump house. Installation began in July. All four new drives are now operational. The testing for thermo graphics is complete on drives one through three. Harmonic testing has been completed on all systems. In addition, some cosmetic work such as painting and removal of some of the old equipment needs to be completed. Final completion per agreement is January 23, 2009.

Shared Municipal Services Incentive Grant - The City of Watertown and Town of Watertown were awarded \$86,940 to be used for a Disinfection By-Products Study. The contract with the Department of State has been approved, signed by the City Manager, and returned to the state for final execution. A meeting with representatives of various towns that are served by our system (aka the stakeholders), was held on December 1st to approve a draft RFP to solicit consulting firms interested in performing the study. The RFP was advertised on December 29th and invitations to respond were also sent to several engineering firms, with whom the City has worked in the past.



It is hoped that the State Comptroller will execute and return the contract prior to the receipt of the proposals on January 22, 2009. The RFPs will be reviewed by the stakeholder committee and recommendations will be forwarded to the City Council and Town of Watertown Board for final authorization to hire a consulting firm to perform the study.

GPS Locations of Water Distribution Components - I.T. and Water Department personnel have been in the process of locating fire hydrants and gate valves for the purpose of adding the water mains and appurtenances to the digital GIS map of the City. This phase of the project is approximately 80% complete. The work will continue as time and weather permit.

Service Vehicle Purchase - During budget deliberations last spring, the City Council directed that the purchase of one of two requested service trucks be made prior to the end of the 07-08 fiscal year instead of two service trucks being purchased at the same time in the 08-09 fiscal year. A service truck was ordered in June as directed. The truck was received October 14th. Because the order was placed so late in the year, a dark blue color was all that remained available on the state contract. However, we think this color is appropriate for the Water Department and would like to order future service trucks in a similar color.

